

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

STATE OFFICIALS, UTILITIES AND NATIONAL ENERGY ALLIANCE BRING WEATHERIZATION MESSAGE TO EVANSVILLE

State of Indiana Inducted into the Energy Efficiency Champion Hall of Fame

EVANSVILLE, IN (Apr. 7, 2006) – Indiana utility regulators, the state's utility consumer advocate and leaders from a national energy alliance today visited an Evansville residence to bring home the message that weatherization and energy efficiency can help customers manage their heating and cooling bills.

"The work being done at this house illustrates the things we can all do to reduce our energy costs throughout the year," said John Clark, Senior Adviser to Gov. Mitch Daniels and Director of the Indiana Office of Energy and Defense Development. "This winter's energy prices have made the need for energy efficiency throughout the nation greater than ever, and we all need to take the steps that will add up to savings on our bills."

Across the nation, the cost of natural gas has been at record-high levels over the past year and many customers have only started to realize the full impact in recent months. Utilities across Indiana – all of which neither mark-up nor profit from the cost of natural gas – have been working with Gov. Daniels and several state agencies since last summer to provide customers with tips and strategies on how to weatherize their homes and use energy safely and wisely. Also, Gov. Daniels announced the creation of the Help Thy Neighbor Heating Fund this winter – a collaborative effort funded by Lilly Endowment, the state's three major natural gas utilities, and private donations.

Clark and Indiana Utility Regulatory Commissioners David Hadley and David Ziegner – along with Indiana Utility Consumer Counselor Susan L. Macey and Alliance to Save Energy President Kateri Callahan – today visited the home of Brenda Bennett-Roberts, which is undergoing a series of weatherization improvements.

Representatives from Indiana's major natural gas utilities - including Vectren Chairman, President and CEO Niel Ellerbrook, Northern Indiana Public Service Company (NIPSCO) Energy Assistance Program Manager Cindy Jackson, and Citizens Gas Communications Manager Dan Considine – also participated as part of the statewide effort to educate customers on the value of weatherization and conservation in helping to control home heating bills

The Bennett-Roberts residence is being weatherized and made energy efficient through a program funded by the Alliance to Save Energy. Weatherization initiatives that took place today included addition of wall and attic insulation, caulking, sealing, weather stripping and installation of a programmable thermostat.

"There is never a bad time to enroll in budget billing programs, add insulation, buy a programmable thermostat or do any of the other things that will reduce your energy bills," said Indiana Utility Consumer Counselor Susan L. Macey. "We also want people to know that financial assistance is available for households that qualify, while encouraging the more fortunate among us to donate to the Help Thy Neighbor Heating Fund as well as energy assistance funds that are offered by utilities throughout Indiana. We also need to emphasize the vital importance of having working smoke and carbon monoxide detectors in all Indiana homes. Consumers should check these devices regularly, and doing so during home weatherization work certainly makes sense."

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The Alliance to Save Energy recently launched ***“The Power is in Your Hands”*** campaign to empower customers to lower their energy bills by using energy wisely. The campaign brings together business, industry, utilities, trade associations, federal agencies and community groups whose common goal is to reduce energy use in order to lower prices in the long run.

“We are excited to induct the State of Indiana into the Energy Efficiency Champion Hall of Fame for its unwavering support, consumer outreach and education, communications and adoption of energy-efficient practices. The power to save energy and money is in the hands of each and every consumer. Even small actions by large numbers of people can add up to significant energy and monetary savings,” said Alliance President Kateri Callahan. “Energy efficiency remains the quickest, cheapest, cleanest way to help consumers lower their home energy bills, extend our nation’s energy supplies, and bring down energy costs for all of us.”

Owens-Corning, a North American Insulation Manufacturers Association member, and 31W Insulation provided insulation and installation services for the Bennett-Roberts home weatherization.

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Weatherization tips:

- Make sure your home or business has proper insulation.
- Properly maintain your heating system (including changing the filter regularly).
- Use a programmable thermostat (or turn the temperature down a few degrees during bedtime and when the home or business is unoccupied).
- Check weather stripping, caulk and seals and make needed repairs.
- Insulate your water heater (if the manufacturer's instructions allow).
- Purchase and use appliances with the Energy Star label.
- Wear appropriate winter clothing and adjust your thermostat accordingly.
- Take additional small steps to improve efficiency (such as opening draperies during the day but closing them at night and setting ceiling fans to run clockwise during winter).

For more information on energy efficiency and/or budget billing:

- Indiana Office of Utility Consumer Counselor (OUCC): www.in.gov/oucc or 1-888-441-2494
- Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission (IURC): www.in.gov/iurc.
- U.S. Department of Energy: www.energysavers.gov or 1-800-363-3732; an insulation fact sheet is available at www.ornl.gov/roofs+walls/insulation.
- The Power is in Your Hands: www.powerisinyourhands.org
- Your local natural gas utility.

To contribute to energy assistance funds:

- Help Thy Neighbor Heating Fund: 1-866-628-1616
- Indiana Community Action Association: 1-800-382-9895

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